



Sheep are one of the oldest domestic animals in the world. They have provided milk, meat, and clothing to people for over 10,000 years.

An average **sheep** grows to be between 90 and 120 pounds with rams (males) being larger than ewes (females). **Sheep** survive mostly on a diet of grass, weeds, and shrubs and have an average life span of 15 years.

In Idaho, there are over 200,000 head of **sheep** and **lamb**, which are grown for two main reasons: meat and wool. Wool from **sheep** is used to make a variety of textile products. The meat comes in many different styles and cuts. The meat of a **sheep** a year old or younger is known as a **lamb**, whereas the meat of an older **sheep** is either hogget or mutton, depending on its age and characteristics. **Lamb** is an excellent source of protein, vitamin B12, niacin, zinc and a good source of iron. **Lamb** meat is both delicious, mild, and tender. Ewes also produce milk that is used in the production of cheese and yogurt. Some well-known sheepmilk cheeses are roquefort and feta.



Idaho's **Big Horn Sheep** is the only native **sheep** variety in the state.



Facts about the U.S. Lamb Industry

History

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U.S. Sheep Farms and Ranches

In 2002, The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated that there were 64,170 sheep ranches in the United States raising approximately 6.4 million sheep.

Flock Animals

Sheep have a social nature, known as a flocking instinct. As such, sheep like to be in groups and herd easily. Sheep can tolerate severe conditions of cold and heat as well as a range of pastures.

Breeds

There are hundreds of breeds of sheep in the world. Some are better known for wool production while others for lamb production. Common breeds in the United States are Columbia, Hampshire, Rambouillet and Suffolk.

Major Predators

Coyotes, dogs and mountain lion/cougars/puma are the leading predators of sheep in the United States, leading to more than 250,000 deaths each year.

Guarding The Flock

Sheep producers use dogs, llamas and donkey to guard sheep flocks from predators. Electric fences/guards, pens and noise-making devices are also used.

Grazing Ecological Benefits

Sheep grazing offers low-cost, natural benefits to the environment and wildlife habitats. Sheep will eat grasses, brush, weeds and other plants, thus controlling undergrowth (and potential spread of fires) in forests and other wooded areas. The U.S. Forest Service has used sheep grazing to decrease soil erosion and to help regenerate tree growth after fires.

Leading Sheep States In The United States

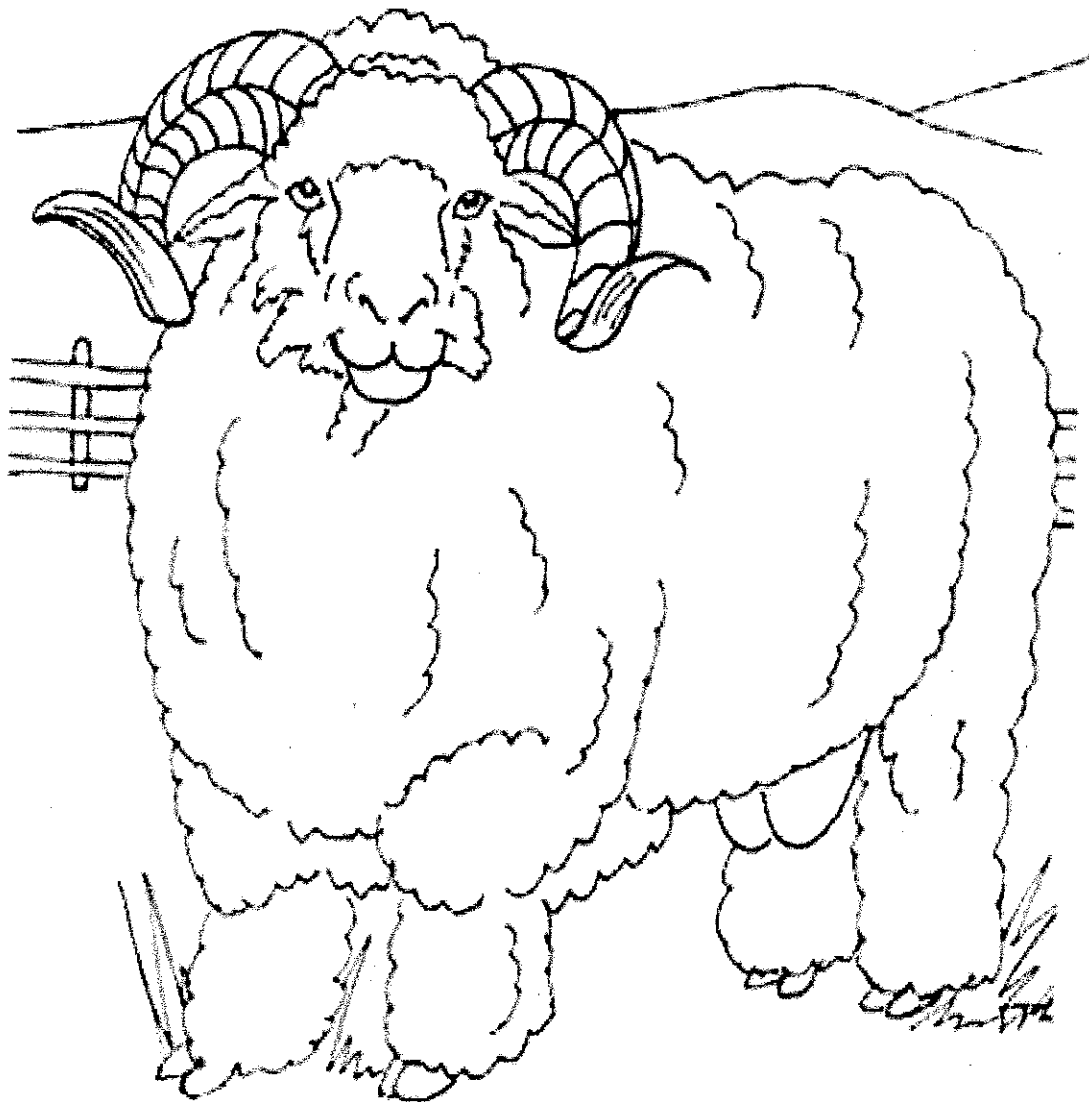
There are sheep operations in most states. Leading sheep/lamb states include Texas, California, Wyoming, South Dakota, Colorado and Utah.

U.S. Lamb Production

In 2002, the United States produced about 207.5 million pounds of lamb/mutton. Approximately 80 percent of U.S. sheep are raised for lamb production. The majority of American sheep are grain fed which leads to a milder flavor. The average dressed weight of an American lamb is 65 pounds.

World Sheep Production

Australia, China and New Zealand have the largest number of sheep and the highest production of lamb/mutton. About 80 percent of the sheep in Australia are raised for wool.



A boy sheep is called a Ram. Sheep are raised to give us meat and wool.

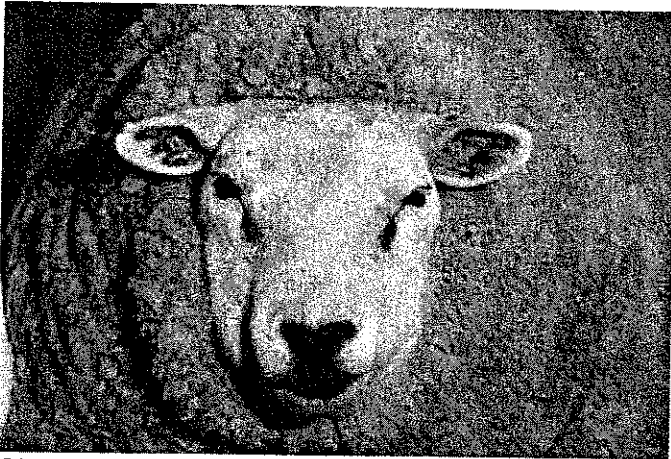


A girl sheep is called a Ewe. Sheep eat grass, weeds, and grain.



Sheep give us wool. Wool is grown by sheep. Sheep get a haircut once a year. This is called shearing. Shearing does not hurt the sheep. The wool removed is called a fleece. Wool is something that can be grown again and again. A word for this is "renewable".
When we renew we help to save the Earth.

Cool Facts on Wool and Sheep:



Sheep Terms: Female sheep are known as ewes, males as rams, yearlings as hoggetts, and young sheep are known as lambs.

Sheep can see more than us. They have a 270 degree radius of view, almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of a circle, humans only see 170 degrees at best. This makes them very difficult to sneak up on or surprise.

Each sheep has it's own "Flight Zone", a measurable distance around their bodies. This is the distance the sheep feels it needs to get away from danger. Sheep will not allow anything (even each other, with exceptions) to come within it's flight zone.

Sheep feel things and have language. they use various sounds to communicate different emotions and messages among flock members. Farmers can easily tell when a sheep is in pain or sick.

Sheep are individual and unique. Each sheep can distinguish between all other sheep, they can recognize fellow flock mates even after years of separation.

Sheep would rather walk up-hill, than down.

Australia produces over 30 percent of the world's wool, the largest single source. New Zealand, Argentina, USA, Canada, Peru,

New Zealand sheep farmers must pay a fat-tax on the methane emissions of their sheep's backsides.

Wool is water resistant and flame retardant.

Race car drivers wear wool-lined suits to reduce their chances of being burned in a fiery crash.

Wool retains its insulative properties when whitened, unlike cotton.

An official American baseball contains 150 yards of wool yarn.



POPULAR CUTS OF LAMB

Popular cuts of lamb are listed below. See if you can find them hidden in the block of letters.

S A Z I S A L E G S T E A K O
L H I C R O W N R O A S T O L
B N O S S P A R E R I B S P O
G N I U L H F D P E L B A P I
B E R O L M I M S H A N K S N
S C P L A D R S B R O I R F C
F K R L E B E E H B T O A U H
E S H F H G A R S K A T C N O
C L S T E W M E A T E N K S P
M I L R I B L E T S H B I K S
E C L A M B U R G E R O W B
W E K J G S I R L O I N Q B A
E S A S I E A R M C H O P M S

ARM CHOP
CROWN ROAST
LOIN CHOPS
LAMBURGER
LEG
LEG STEAK
NECK SLICES
RACK
RIBLETS
SHANKS
SHISH KEBOBS
SHOULDER
SIRLOIN
SPARE RIBS
STEW MEAT

Wool

Did You Know?

- Wool is the **natural fiber** grown from sheep.
- Wool clothes are **cool in the summer** and **warm in the winter**?
- Wool will not catch on fire? This means wool is **flame-resistant**.

Different breeds of sheep grow different kinds of wool.

Sheep can grow fine wool, medium wool or coarse wool.

- **Fine wool** is often used to make **suits**.
- **Medium wool** is often used to make **blankets**.
- **Coarse wool** is often used to make **carpets**.

How Wool Becomes Fabric:

1. **SHEARING**

Spring is usually shearing time for sheep. Sheep have their wool removed in one piece called a fleece.

2. **SCOURING**

The fleece is washed in big tubs to remove dirt, grease and grass.

3. **CARDING**

The clean dry wool is then carded. Carding means to comb the wool to straighten the fibers.

4. **SPINNING**

The wool is spun into yarn. Coarser wool is spun into woolen yarn. Finer wool is spun into worsted yarn

- **Woolen:** Woolen yarn is usually used in carpets or thick sweaters.
- **Worsted:** Worsted yarn is usually used to make lightweight fabrics for suits and dresses.

5. **KNITTING/WEAVING**

The yarn is knit or woven into fabric.